

A.

REVIEW

OF THE

Affairs of *FRANCE*:

Purg'd from the Errors and Partiality of *News-Writers*
and *Petty-Statesmen*, of all Sides.

Saturday, April 8. 1704.

THE General Head I am upon, is the wonderful Benefit of Arbitrary Power; and methinks I need not make an Apology here, and tell the Reader again, that I do not mean the Benefit to the Subject; but that I distinguish between the Greatness of the Monarch as a King, and the Greatness of a Nation as a People: But such is the Iniquity of the Times, that 'tis Dangerous to walk on the Brink of a tender Point.

I dare not say, that all our good Friends who are so very full of the Word Arbitrary Government, *understand the Meaning of it*; and possibly their want of rightly Understanding it, may have been the Reason of their Mistaking the just Power of a Lawful Prince, for the Real *Bug-bear* we speak of; and the People who are of this sort, generally are for allowing their Governours little or no Power at all, and perhaps in the end, would be for no Governours at all.

I am far from giving Arbitrary Power a Character to recommend it to the Subject: But without doubt, That Prince, whose Designs center in his own Projects, enlarging his Dominions, and in the Conquest of his Neighbours; there is nothing can contribute more to this end, than a Despotick Arbitrary Dominion over his

Subjects, whereby he obliges them, without any Reserve, to Comply with whatever he demands; to give what he asks; to go where he sends; and to do what he directs.

When a Prince must court his Subjects to give him leave to raise an Army, and when that's done, tell him when he must disband them; That if he wants Money, must Assemble the States of his Country, and not only give them good words to get it, and tell them what 'tis for, but give them an Account how it is expended, before he calls for more. The Subjects in such a Government are certainly Happy, in having their Properties and Privileges secur'd; but if I were of his Privy-Council, -I would advise such a Prince to content himself within the Compass of his own Government, and never think of Invading his Neighbours, or Increasing his Dominions: For Subjects, who Stipulate with their Princes, and make Conditions of Government, who Claim to be Govern'd by Laws, and make those Laws themselves; who need not pay their Money, but when they see Cause, and may refuse to pay it when demanded, without their Consent; such Subjects will never Empt their Purles upon Foreign Wars, for enlarging the Glory of their Sovereign. If

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such People are free to Fight, or Pay, it is always for the Defence and Security of their own, not for the Conquests and Glories of their Prince.

On this score it is, I say, That Arbitrary Government, whether it be suited to the Peoples Happiness or No, is certainly suited to the Monarch's Greatness, and that's so visible, that if I were to run thro' all the Histories of Time, till we come to the *Roman Empire*, we can find no Prince ever Prosecuted his Glory by his Arms, to any degree, but what had at the same time an Absolute Government of his own Subjects.

On the contrary, Such Kings as being under Limitation at Home, have Attempted any Capital Conquests Abroad, have been often Defeated for want of needful Supplies, and have been obliged to quit such Great Enterprizes, to come Home and settle the Affairs of their own Kingdoms; *Charles V. Emperor of Germany*, is a Remarkable Instance of the Truth of this, and History is full of the like.

Neither can I deny, but that Absolute Monarchy may have some useful things in it, with respect to Government in General. Were Mankind but assured that all their Kings should be Angels, that knew every thing they ought to do, and did every thing they knew was Just; but till that Blessed Time shall come, *however well it may do Abroad*, we desire to be excus'd in *England*, having at present *neither Inclination nor Occasion for it*—

The Arbitrary Government of the *French*, as is already Noted, is the Grand Foundation of their Present Grandeur, and the Dependence of the Nobility and Gentry, upon their Prince, of which we have Treated already, is not the least step to it: Nor is it amiss to observe how in former times, the want of this Dependence and Arbitrary Power, was often-times the Ruin of the Greatest Undertakings, even in this very Kingdom of *France*.

And what if I should say, That for want of this Branch of Arbitrary Power in *France*, the Protestant Religion mis'd of being at this day the Settled and Establish'd Religion of that Nation; the Instance is plain:

Henry IV. truly call'd the Great, the Grandfather of the Present King of *France*,

whose Life and Actions will hereafter, take up a great deal of Room in these Volumes, while he was Embarrass'd with the Catholick League, and engag'd in a Civil War for his own Establishment, had several hard Tasks to manage the French Gentlemen of his own Party; the Stories are at large in History, and therefore I shall only give an Abridgment of the Fact, and refer the Reader to the History of that Time.

At the Death of *Henry the Third*, who was Stab'd in his Tent by a Jacobin Fryer, the King of *Navarr* was by the Right of Succession, the next Heir, and the Murdered King had Life enough left him to call his Nobility together, and exhort them to Own and Acknowledge the King of *Navarr* as their Rightful and Lawful King, and not to Concern the Difference of Religion in the Dispute of their Allegiance.

Notwithstanding all these Exhortations, the King of *Navarr* found himself in Extream Difficulties; the Duke of *Montpensier* made Conscience of obeying a Heretick King: The Duke of *Effernon* did not like his way of making War, and all the Catholick Princes in the Army refused him their Allegiance, but on Condition of his Promising them to turn Catholick,

The Distressed Prince was fain to deal Politickly; and as his Conscience press'd him on one hand, and his Crown on the other, neither Consented or Denied, but ventured on the former, and with good Words and half Promises, brought them over to Espouse his Party, and expect the rest: And in the Writing which they gave him, swearing their Allegiance, they made him swear to Maintain the Roman Catholick Religion; and all this notwithstanding, Monsieur *Villiers*, the Duke of *Effernon*, Monsieur *Viry*, and abundance more both of the Gentry and Common Soldiers, left him.

The farther and fuller Account of which, I refer the Reader for, to *Sam. Davila's History of the Civil Wars of France*, lib. 10. fol. 408, 409, 410, 411.

After this, when the King had maintained the War some Years, with great Expence of Blood, and the Catholick Nobility found him still delaying his Conversion,

as they term'd it; such Murmurings were heard in his Camp, that he found they would all forsake him.

The Princes of the Blood told him plainly they could serve him no longer, the Duke *de Montpensier*, who lay ill of wounds receiv'd in his Cause, sent him word that all the Princes were ready to forsake him, and that he himself, tho' he did it with Grief of Heart, would not be the last to save his Soul. *Davil*. lib. 13. fol. 612.

The King thus limited by his Nobility, obeys his Subjects, and changes his Religion: Had Arbitrary Government been the Mode, Had Passive Obedience been the Stated Doctrine of the Catholick Church, King *Henry* had never chang'd his Religion; The *French* Gentry had never Murmured at their Prince, but had Obeyed without reserve, and the Protestant Religion had been the Establish'd Profession of the Gallican Church.

As want of Arbitrary Power hindred the Settlement of *France* in a Race of Protestant Kings; so Arbitrary Power obtain'd afterward, Un-Church'd the whole Body of the Protestants, and in a manner root-ed the Name of a *Hugonot* out of the Kingdom.

All these things still concur in advancing the *French* Greatness; and I must take leave to differ from those Gentlemen who have Written so Learnedly upon the Matter, of the King of *France* Banishing his Protestant Subjects; I allow the Barbarity, the Injustice, and Inhumanity of

it; and I allow it appears more so to us, as we are Protestants, than it would do to us, if we were Romanists; because we Sympathize with them in their Sufferings; but I cannot agree as to the Imprudence of it.

I willingly agree with those Notions of Government that tell us, the Multitude of People are the Strength of a Kingdom; and the Sinews of Trade. I agree that in sending away 300000 *Hugonots* he fill'd his Neighbours with much of the Wealth of his own Country, and I may say, with some of the Poverty of it too: I allow that he found Thousands of them with Arms in their hands, strengthening the Forces of his Enemies, and met them in the Field again, upon all Occasions.

But the King of *France* cou'd not but know, that 'twas better for him to see 'em in his Enemies Armies Abroad, than to be in apprehensions of them in greater Bodies in his own Dominions.

If we allow the King of *France* to fore-know his own Designs, with what Absolute Dominion he purpos'd to Rule his Subjects at Home, and with what Vigour Invade his Neighbours Abroad: You must at the same time believe he also foresaw, that it would be very often in the Power of the *Hugonots* to Embroil him at Home, and that back'd by the Assistance of those Foreign Powers, with whom he was to be Engaged Abroad, they would be able at any Time, to impose Conditions on him, and check that Arbitrary Absolute Government, which he resolv'd to maintain.

Mercure Scandale :

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ADVICE from the Scandalous CLUB:

THE Society was in hopes to have some Rest from the Fatigues given them by the News-writers, and after giving them fair Notice, and a full Month to

receive their Papers, and correct their Mistakes too; expected they would have been careful, and taken the Conditions offered them; but this Month of Recess has so fill'd

fill'd the Minutes of the Society with the Clamour of the People, that they have been oblig'd to promise if the News-writers do not both review their past Errors, and promise to avoid the like for the future, in Eight Days more, the World shall have yet a more particular Account of their Scandalous Publications than hitherto has been done.

The Society has had a strange Clamour about their Ears this Week by the Poor, concerning the Price of Coals; and one bolder than the rest, told the Club, if they would not pass some Censure about it, they would Mob 'em, and pull the House down.

This put the Society to some Perplexity, being loth to be insulted; so they desired time to send Messengers the next Morning to *Billingsgate* to understand the meaning of it: This Favour being obtain'd, and the Crowd dismiss'd for the present, the Messengers being return'd, brought a lamentable Account, that there was sad and bloody News come to Town, of a great Fleet of Colliers who came out of *Newcastle* before the Convoys, and were ruin'd by the *French* Privateers, and that was the reason.

The Society call'd for the News-papers, and found there was nothing of it to be found there, upon which they concluded it was a Story contriv'd on purpose. At last a certain Lighter-Man came and told the Society there was something in it, and some small Damage was done, but nothing considerable: But his Master had made the Letters be written merely to raise the Price of Coals, he having a great Stock by him.

This appear'd to villainous and scandalous, that it made the Society come to the following Resolutions.

I. Resolved that if the Fleet of Colliers came out of *Newcastle* without Convoy, when they might have had a Convoy for staying for it, it was their Faults, and they ought to lose their Ships, and no body will pity them.

II. If there was no Convoy appointed them, they are to be blam'd that ought to have done it.

III. If the Convoy was appointed but neglected it, they ought to be hang'd that are guilty.

IV. If either or all of these were true yet there was no sufficient Reason for raising the Price of Coals from 35 to 55 s. per Chald.

V. That to forge Letters of publick Disasters when there is none, *Real ones coming fast enough*, or to make them greater than they are, to raise the Price of Coals, is a Scandal to this Nation, and a Reproach on the Laws as deficient, in not ascertaining a Punishment for such a publick Mischief.

These Resolutions gave the People Satisfaction, and away they went in Quest of the Lighter-Man.

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